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TAGS: GR

SUBJECT: GREEK FIRM CLAIMS BREAKTHROUGH IED TECHNOLOGY--
BUT IS IT REAL?

Classified By: DCM THOMAS COUNTRYMAN. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On 13-14 April 2007, Embassy DATT, ODC representative, and PolOff visited Soukos Robots facilities in Larissa. The purpose of the visit was to gather information on and/or solicit a demonstration of an invention that Konstantinos Soukos claims can identify and disable improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from over a hundred meters. Although he believes he is being treated poorly by his American counterparts at Raytheon, Soukos nonetheless insists that he wants to transfer his anti-IED technology to the American military or an American firm. Unfortunately, Soukos was extremely reticent to divulge any hard information that could convince responsible parties in the USG or DoD of the viability of his invention, citing secrecy concerns. END SUMMARY.

SOUKOS ROBOTS

¶2. (C) Konstantinos Soukos is chairman, president, and the principal driving force behind Soukos Robots. His bomb-disposal robots Odysseas (Odysseus) and Iraklis (Hercules) are currently in use at the Athens International Airport (documented); Soukos claims he has also sold similar systems in the United States. (Demonstration models on the showroom floor exhibited American flag stickers.) Soukos also designs and sells industrial robots and various military devices. Soukos is currently in a estimated \$31 million partnership with Raytheon to market a version of Soukos' electronic anti-RPG armor. Soukos Robots corporation was founded in 1979 and employs approximately 60 people. Soukos has a well-deserved reputation as an intelligent and creative designer. By all appearances, however, he operates his business on personal charisma, to the detriment of contractual obligations and legal frameworks. He is highly concerned with the secrecy of his operations: the headquarters facility visited was surrounded by extensive razor wire fencing, numerous cameras, and private guards. Security arrangements at a second facility (under construction) were less visible. Because of his obsession with secrecy, Soukos does not acknowledge the existence of any other facilities, although it is obvious that the various robots on display were not fabricated, and likely not even designed, in the acknowledged headquarters building and under-construction factory.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT RAYTHEON

¶3. (C) In extensive conversation, Soukos frequently complained of his relationship with Raytheon. Most recently, he was stunned by the need to receive permission to view the classified results of Aberdeen Proving Grounds tests of his anti-RPG product. DATT advised him to fill out the necessary paperwork because this was a government regulation. Soukos also complained that Raytheon was making excuses to avoid

paying the \$30 million-plus he claims he is owed and furthermore Raytheon hinted that it would require further contracts for future technologies before making payment. Embassy delegation was unable to verify the claim, but DATT advised Soukos that U.S. law prohibits extortion and corrupt practices by U.S. companies operating overseas. Soukos' obsession with secrecy was also evident in his strong objection to Raytheon submitting a patent application for the technology because "the next day, the whole world will know Soukos' secrets!"

ANTI-IED TECHNOLOGY

¶4. (C) When discussing the promised anti-IED technology, Soukos gave few details of its operation. He promised that the device could both detect and disable IEDs from a long range. Soukos emphasized that the device does not "smell" explosives, nor does it use an EMP to disable them. He refused to elaborate on what his invention actually did, focusing only on what it did not do.

¶5. (C) Video footage playing on screens in the background of his office, however, showed images of the technology in use. The video showed a split-screen clip of a field in which three explosive devices were hidden; along the top of the screen, a standard video camera feed was used, while on the bottom, the three explosive devices were illuminated white-hot against a high-contrast grayscale background. Interestingly, anecdotal evidence indicates that moss growing on nearby trees was also illuminated in one test of the technology. PolOff viewed prototype of the purported anti-IED device, and observed that the device was likely to use some sort of directed electromagnetic radiation -- a category that includes visible light, infrared, ultraviolet, x-ray, gamma ray, and numerous other exotic-sounding frequencies -- on the basis of the 4 scope-like apparatus.

employed. It is plausible that electromagnetic radiation could be used to create the video footage on display, since visible light is a form of electromagnetic radiation used to create standard video. There is, however, absolutely no hint as to how Soukos plans to disable the IEDs once found. As previously stated, Soukos would not disclose even the basic physical principles of how the device worked, citing secrecy concerns.

PRO-U.S. MOTIVATION

¶6. (C) Soukos stated that he was motivated to transfer the anti-IED technology to the U.S. because he supports American actions in the war on terror. He was aware of the great toll IEDs have had on U.S. forces and the danger they continue to pose. Soukos displayed a degree of Islamophobia but did not say whether this feeling influenced his pro-American stance. He repeatedly emphasized that he was not asking for money but just wanted to make sure the technology got into the right hands. Through extended conversations, however, Soukos revealed that he was more than a little interested in earning a global reputation.

COMMENT

¶7. (C) Soukos promised a demonstration of the anti-IED technology in which the parameters (ordnance type, placement, and concealment) could be controlled by USG representatives. He maintained that his anti-IED device was already a reality but alluded to a future shipment (expected in May) that would enable him to demonstrate it to full effect. While Soukos has a good track record (28 years of business fuelled by his inventions), and there is no reason to believe that Soukos would lie about his technology, his refusal to provide convincing facts about the fundamental principles behind his anti-IED device undermine any efforts to bring the device to the attention of responsible DoD authorities.

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